



## prophets in the cathedral of rock?

*The Thieves Bring You Back To  
Church In a Big Way*  
By Patrick Sheehy

I grew up on a steady diet of the Gods of Rock. Blame my brother, John. He's ten years older. John drove a Dodge Challenger.

photo by Farzer King



John listened to DC101. The a/c vent in my room led directly to his and brought a part of John's world up to me. From John's room I was treated and educated in the ways of classic rock. John got the Led out. He brought Steven Tyler and Aerosmith into my room. AC/DC lulled me to sleep. My parents dug easy listening. They were not pleased. By the time they got wise to my eavesdropping the damage had been done. I was an enthusiastic convert to the music of my older brother. And there was no de-programming me.

"AC/DC on acid, Pink Floyd on uppers, The Who on a pub-crawl."

The band actually compares their style to some pretty impressive company and I took offence. In my world, just putting your name in the same sentence with any of the Gods of Rock meant you were asking for a lightning bolt to insert itself in your John Brown hind parts. I first heard The Thieves on the Insomnia Radio podcast. Jason read off their promo material. It included the above

photo by Farzer King





references to bands that my great grandchildren will probably listen to. I was highly pissed off. Then I listened to the music. My anger quickly subsided.

Their latest offering, *Tales From The White Line*, will evoke fond memories for some. Remember the days when your money actually bought an album that was good for every single track? When you weren't buying one or two good tunes, one of which is a cover, followed by a bunch of mediocrity? Welcome back, my friends.

Hailing from Oxford in England and under the original moniker of Vade

photo by Farzer King



# the thieves



Mecum, the band enjoyed a solid albeit modest following. Vade Mecum were believers in bringing people back and keeping them informed. Fan communication quickly established itself as a cornerstone and continues to this day. (Members even make regular journal entries on the website with unedited and direct observations from the road.) In those days, Vade Mecum put lots of effort into creating and then direct mailing an entertaining, witty newsletter that kept everyone updated monthly on future gigs and gave readers a personal connection with the band. As a result, the fan base continued to increase and demand started to take its toll.

Bass player Sam Stokes: "We used to play all over England and it was pretty brutal actually. We'd drive 4 hours north to some shit hole in the wall bar, play a show, then drive the 4 hour journey home to get back in time for work the next day. We did that about 4 times a week and although it kills you, you get really tight and I guess you gotta to pay your dues."

Vade Mecum decided to take things to the



next level on April 1st, 2003. April Fool's Day. It wasn't planned that way. According to Sam. "When the cheapest tickets for that month were on April Fool's Day, the choice was made." They packed their bags. They quit their jobs. They sold their belongings. Newly christened as The Thieves, the guys took up residence in a downtown L.A. warehouse.

An album followed. *One Eyed Poker*. Ten tracks that gave listeners a steady diet of back beat and vibrant guitar riffs and solid bass. The first track, *In The While*, makes you wish you were in a smoke filled basement club watching the guys do their thing. It's not a teaser. Everything that follows brings you right into a live audience with them. The album was filed away as "alternative" by music outlets. Not necessarily true. Classic rock without the aged pedigree.

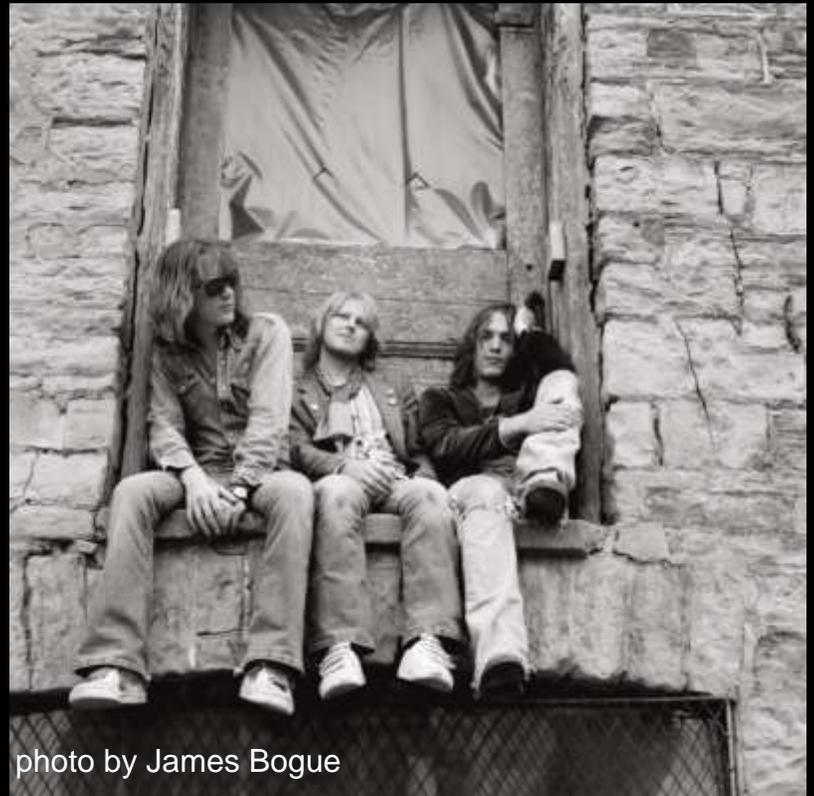


photo by James Bogue

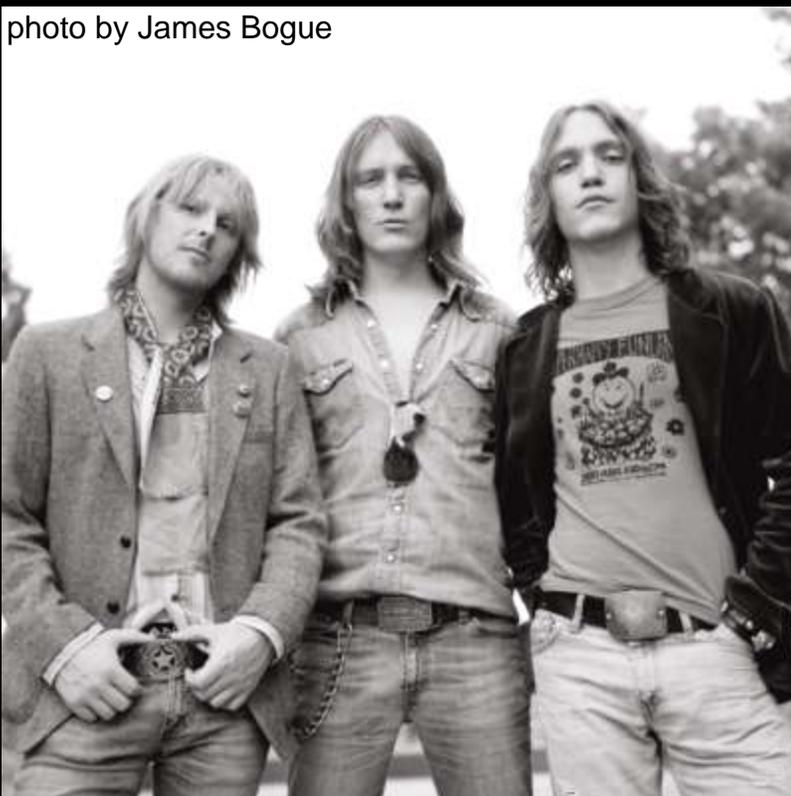
Throaty, bluesy vocals. High-octane tempo that doesn't even let you think about skipping to the next song.

The outlets made a mistake...

Paying their dues, The Thieves hit the streets. Playing venues from Kansas to Toronto with the occasional foray home to England, they continued to connect with fans and even enlisted them to actively help promote them. Even a visit to the website invites the listener to join the Thieves Guild, and assist with 'street propaganda, plans and scams'.

Not seen smugly as vassals, The Thieves are as loyal to their fans as the fans are to them. Their outlook in the jaded world of music is truly refreshing to hear. "We get on really well with our fans. I guess at the end of the day we're all passionate music lovers so there's a common ground. We've also been at this game for a bloody long time now,

photo by James Bogue





which gets rid of all the bullshit and egos - not that I think we are a bunch of wankers or would be if we had massive success. I guess we're just a sound bunch of geezers. As Bon Scott said 'It's a long way to the top if you wanna rock n roll' and it's so fucking true. Our fans have seen us grow, stuck with us and kept believing in us."

The reward to the fans recently hit the streets and is even available through the major distribution outlet of iTunes. Tales From The White Line, released in October, doesn't really act



Image courtesy of [London @ Suicide Girls.com](http://London@SuicideGirls.com)

only been on the American music scene for 2 years. The music is polished up but loses none of its edge. Listeners will be reminded of all the classic rock bands The Thieves claim as influences. (The guitar work on Don't You Lose Me evokes memories of early AC/DC albums, and features an obvious tip of the hat to their 1990 anthem "Thunderstruck"). Production and track arrangements are crisper as well, with one song flowing right into the next.

But don't be fooled. Despite the influence of producers, promoters and engineers, the music is raw and emotional. The devotion to the craft remains just as focused and enthusiastic as it was when Vade Mecum was packing the Jericho Tavern with rowdy students in Oxford.

Sam Stokes puts it best. "I can tell you one of the most memorable moments. It was when we recorded 'Tales from the White Line'. We really wanted to get a deep down and dirty classic vibe for the track, so we went back to an old studio in the English country side (Jacob's Studios), got a load of old gear and put it down to a 16 track analogue tape. We knew just from putting the basic tracks down that the song was gonna have a wicked vibe. Then late one night we



Image courtesy of [London @ Suicide Girls.com](http://London@SuicideGirls.com)

like a sophomore offering from a band that's



got one of our mates to come down to put some B3 Hammond on the jam out section on the end. We were all in the control room, lights turned down low and our mate just went all out nuts on the end of the track. It was fucking magic and felt like; wow we're really making something classic here. I guess as a musician you always have this dream of one day making 'THE' album (Like Led Zeppelin's IV or The Stones' Exile On Main Street) and I guess it felt like well f\*ck we've got some of that vibe right here. I definitely don't think we've achieved 'THE' album yet but I think we still have it in us and 'Tales' is a glimpse of that for me."

It's more than a glimpse. It's willpower at its purest. It's emotion in its rawest form. It's a return to that attitude your parents used to hate, the thing that kept a smile on your face.

It's Rock And Roll...

The Thieves can be found online at

[www.thebandofthieves.com](http://www.thebandofthieves.com)

You can find a free sample of their music, as well as two wallpapers on our Media Package page!

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